

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O P 261608Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7686

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

S E C R E T AMMAN 2225

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM PICKERING

DEPT PASS USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,MASS, JO, US,SA

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

REF: (A) STATE 99335, (B) JIDDA 2961 (C) AMMAN 2224

1. RECOGNIZE THAT WE CANNOT MASTERMIND IN GREAT
DETAIL WHAT SAUDIS MAY WANT TO SAY ON AIR DEFENSE IF
PACKAGE GOES FORWARD. THERE IS ALREADY A CERTAIN
ELEMENT OF UNCONTROLABILITY INTRODUCED BY MOST RECENT
EXCHANGE BRIEFED TO ME BY RIFAI THIS MORNING (ERF C).
HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE EITHER SIDE (SAUDI OR
JORDANIAN) WAS PASSING ON FINAL WORD FROM WHAT WE HAVE
HEARD OF THE EXCHANGE. WE WILL ALSO DO OUR BEST TO
KEEP DOWN PRESS COMMENT FROM HERE AS WELL AS OFFICIAL
STATEMENTS, BUT APPARENT LEAKS TO THE "JERUSALEM POST"
OF SENSITIVE DAO CABLES DO NOT HELP AND WE WILL HAVE
TO CUT DOWN ON OUR REPORTING SOME TO STOP THIS.

2. CROWN PRINCE HASSAN'S VISIT REPRESENTS EITHER ANOTHER
POSSIBLE INTRUSION INTO THE PROCESS OR ELSE A HELPFUL DEVELOPMENT
DEPENDING ON HOW IT GETS HANDLED. MY UNDERSTANDING FROM THE
KING AND CROWN PRINCE IS THAT HE WILL NOT BE INSTRUCTED

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TO RAISE THE ISSUE. HE PERSONALLY IS VERY FAVORABLE TO

ANY ANTI-SOVIET SOLUTION. ON THIS BASIS I BRIEFED HIM
ALONG THE LINES OF WHAT I HAD GIVEN KING IN THE PAST--
PHASED APPROACH, SOME SIGNS OF PROGRESS.ETC. HE ASKED
ME WHAT WAS KING'S REACTION TO DOLS 520 MILLION
PACKAGE (IT'S BEEN IN THE PRESS HERE AS YOU KNOW.)
I SAID I DID NOT KNOW BECAUSE I HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN
INSTRUCTIONS TO DISCUSS ANYTHING LIKE THAT WITH THE KING.

3. ADDITIONAL PROBLEM IS WAITING FOR US ON APRIL 30. I
UNDERSTAND WE ARE ALL PROCEEDING ON BASIS THAT SOME
RESPONSE WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM SAUDIS BY THEN. IF
NOT, I EXPECT THAT JORDANIANS WILL THEN WANT TO TAKE SOME
STEPS TOWARD THE SOVIETS. A SOVIET AIR FORCE DELEGATION IS EXPECTED
IN MID-MAY. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE KING WILL BE INCLINED
TO BEGIN MAKING PUBLIC STATEMENTS AGAIN AFTER THIS TIME
PERIOD ROLLS AROUND. IT WOULD OF COURSE BE UNFORTUNATE
IF A CATASTROPHE OF TIMING TOOK PLACE WHERE SAUDIS ARE
READY TO MOVE AHEAD AND JORDANIANS THROW OVER THE TRACES
AT SAME TIME, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE EXCELLENT WORK DONE ON
THIS BY AMBASSADOR PROTER. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES --
IF IT BEGINS TO LOOK LIKE MORE TIME IS REQUIRED TO GET
A SAUDI ANSWER -- I SUGGEST THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO HAVE
SOME KIND OF A REQUEST TO JORDANIANS TO HOLD OFF UNTIL A
DATE CERTAIN -- BEYOND WHICH THEY AND WE WOULD ASSUME
NOTHING MORE CAN BE DONE. THIS WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM A
HIGH LEVEL EITHER IN THE FORM OF INSTRUCTION TO ME OR
A MESSAGE. LATTER WOULD BE PREFERABLE, ON THE BASIS OF
SECRETARYS LAST MESSAGE TO KING,BUT YOU WILL BE THE
BEST JUDGE OF WHAT CAN BE DONE. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR
BILL PORTER'S JUDGMENT ABOUT WHAT MORE IF ANYTHING, WE
CAN SAFELY SAY TO JORDANIANS IN SUCH AN INSTRUCTION OR
MESSAGE ABOUT CURRENT SAUDI VIEWS IF THIS CONTINGENCY
ARISES. PRESUME IT MIGHT ALSO BE POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE HAWK
CONTRACTS (AND JORDANIAN TRAINING) IN A " HOLD" STATUS FOR AN
ADDITIONAL TIME PERIOD WHICH MIGHT ALSO HELP HERE IN
EXTENDING DEADLINES.
PICKERING

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USCINCEUR.

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